

## Bulldogs

Continued from Page A1

"If you played for Gary Hammond, you didn't have long hair," said Mark Johnson, a member of the 1972 team. "And you knew that going in." "We looked kind of out of place going to Portland in 1972 with crewcuts," said Tim Wood, another teammate.

The Bulldogs' opponents were the top-ranked Jefferson Democrats from Portland, a larger school in a vastly larger city.

The city boys.

Some of their players sported Afros, a more flamboyant look that matched the Democrats' fast-paced style of basketball, so different from the methodical, ball control strategy that Hammond had honed during his 19 years as the Bulldog coach.

This wasn't a David vs. Goliath situation, to be sure.

Nor was it even necessarily comparable to the fictional (though based on a true story) Indiana state championship game depicted in the movie "Hoosiers."

Baker was not a newcomer to the state tournament, despite being one of the smaller schools in Oregon's AAA division, which included the state's biggest high schools.

(Today Baker competes at the Class 4A level; the state's larger high schools are divided into the Class 5A and Class 6A divisions.)

The year before, in 1971, the Bulldogs finished sixth, beating South Salem 39-34 in the first round, losing 39-37 to Grant in the quarterfinals, and beating Medford 58-37 in the consolation round before losing 59-42 to Sunset in the fourth-place game.

Baker finished fifth in 1969 and third in 1966.

"I think one of the things that made Baker successful was that they had been there a few years prior, so they weren't as much in awe," said Greg Hammond, Gary's son and a 1970 BHS graduate who lives near Baker City and played for his dad.

Experience aside, Baker entered the 1972 tournament with a 16-6 record, including two losses to Bend, a team that didn't even qualify for state.

Baker clinched its tournament berth by routing Mac-Hi 72-52 on March 4 — almost 3 weeks before the tournament started.

Jefferson was 22-1.

The Democrats had three players who went on to play Division I college basketball.

Baker had one — 6-foot-7 post Daryl Ross, who played at Montana State.

That Jefferson was in the championship game was hardly surprising.

But Baker's appearance — its first in the title game since 1943 — was not expected.

The Democrats had breezed to the championship game by beating Redmond by 31 points, Jesuit by 13 and Klamath Union by 20.

The Bulldogs, meanwhile, started the tournament by falling behind Corvallis before rallying for a 51-45 win propelled by sophomore Rick Scrivner's 22 points, including nine straight field goals.

After setting a tournament record with 65% field goal shooting in a 64-44 romp over Newberg in the quarterfinals, Baker needed a buzzer-beater from Ross to get past Sunset, 50-49, in the semifinals.

And surely it was this litany of contrasts — enrollments, hairstyles, paths to the title game — that lured some of those 13,395 fans to the Coliseum on that March night.

As sometimes happens, all those differences combined to produce the kind of game that people remember vividly 50 years later.

Baker led most of the contest.

Jefferson rallied late in the fourth quarter to win, 59-52.

Yet even though that group of Bulldogs didn't match the 1938 or 2007 squads in bringing home a state championship, the 1972 team — and tournament — remain milestones in local sports and community history.

And it's why some of those players, and others associated with that team, will gather again, in the much more modest confines of the Baker High School gym, on Friday evening, Feb. 25.

To be honored for their accomplishments.

And to remember those who can't join them.

Gary Hammond died on

### Ann Ross reminisces about her late husband, Daryl

*Editor's Note: Jan Davis, whose husband, Mike, also a key member of the 1972 team, died in 2016, was not available for an interview.*

Ann Ross didn't watch the game that defined her husband's high school basketball career.

But after being married to Daryl for more than 30 years, she almost felt as if she had been in Portland's Memorial Coliseum the night of March 25, 1972.

Baker's 59-52 loss to Jefferson in the state championship game "came up quite a bit" over the decades, Ann Ross said.

But not from Daryl, whom she married in 1979 after meeting him at a rodeo in Burns, where Ann grew up.

"He didn't talk a whole lot about it," she said. "He was very humble."

But while the couple were living in Baker in the 1980s, she said she often talked with people who had fond and vivid memories of the 1972 team and its improbable run at the state tournament.

And when the Rosses moved to Burns in 1989 — where Ann still lives, following Daryl's death in 2015 — she said she occasionally ran into a Burns resident who had also attended the classic 1972 championship game.

In Burns, Daryl worked for the Bureau of Land Management and coached both of the couple's daughters, Chelsea and Erin.

Both were accomplished athletes at Burns High School. Chelsea

was Class 3A player of the year.

"They definitely got that from their dad," Ann said with a laugh.

Randy Daugherty, who was a junior teammate of Daryl's on the 1972 Baker team, said Daryl, despite being a tall and very strong player, was also a "gentle giant."

"No matter how much he got roughed up, double or triple teamed, he never retaliated," Daugherty said. "He just took it and kept playing."

Erin Ross, who is an elementary school teacher, shared her memories of her dad in an email:

"Dad always enjoyed sharing his passion of basketball with us. He spent countless hours teaching us every post play in his arsenal. And although many years have passed since I played at (Burns High School), when I close my eyes, I can still see him standing in the balcony of the High School gym. Camera on a tripod in the northernmost corner, I would glance at him periodically throughout the game, looking for him to advise me on a play.

"I looked forward to the moments when he would stop me before I would go into the locker room to give me some advice, and the conversations that would ensue on the car ride home. I always knew that Dad was seeing what I needed to do and I trusted him implicitly.

"When I was getting ready to leave for a volleyball camp at BSU my senior year, Dad snuck a letter into my bag. I found it when I arrived and have kept it all these



Photo courtesy of Ann Ross

Daryl Ross with his wife, Ann, and their daughters, Erin, (next to Ann), and Chelsea, far right.

years. In the letter Dad outlined what I should be remembering to do while I was at camp to help me get recruited. My favorite points were: 'Don't come home saying, "I didn't play well at times." That is a decision you make at the time you are there.' The other was, 'They don't care how good other people say you are, they want to see it for themselves.'

Chelsea Ross, who is a mental health therapist and career counselor, also wrote about her dad:

"He said that he always gauged himself by his competition and working. And I can remember him saying on many occasions that 'Anything worth doing is worth doing right.' I truly believe that is the way he lived his life. He fully invested in everything that he did, nothing was done halfway. He worked hard not only at his

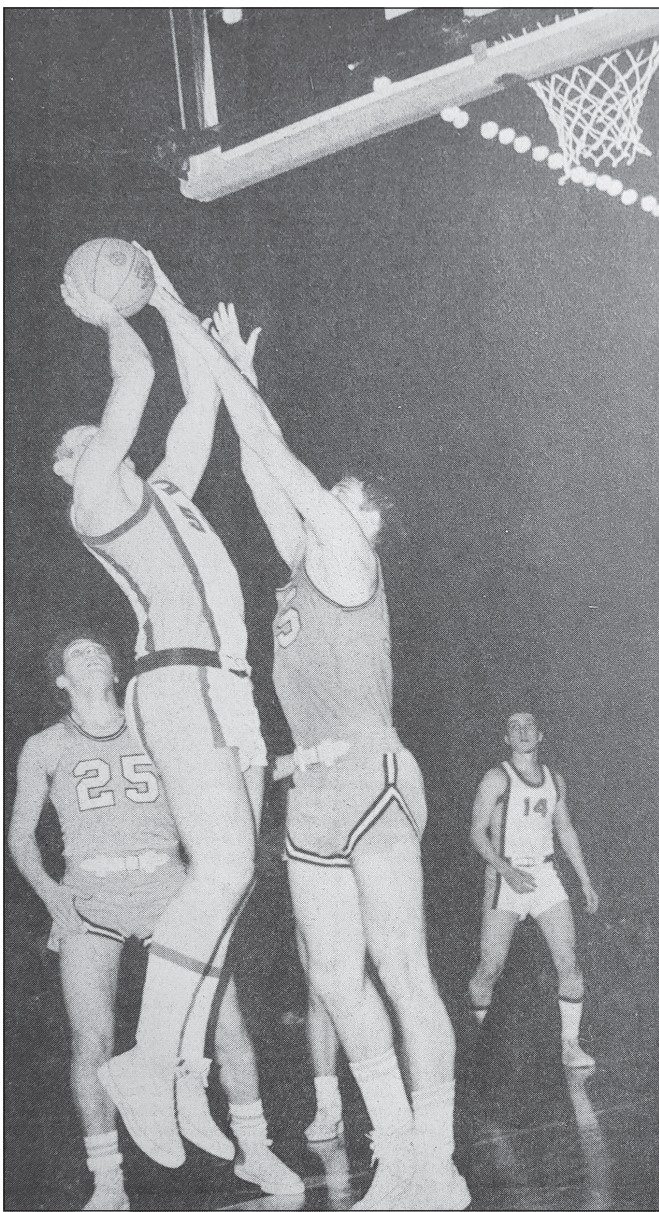
job, but at everything. Whether that meant having to walk to basketball practice in high school, analyzing team roping video for improvement, or golfing 18 holes after a long day of work, he did it. He was willing to do what it took to be successful and for that reason most of his life he was.

"The one thing that I am still in awe of is his never-ending optimism. How often have we all complained about trivial things like: 'It's too cold, my muscles are sore, or I had a bad day.' It sounds crazy, but in my entire life I never heard him complain, not once. Not when our roof blew off our house, not when he was in pain from breaking several ribs, and not even when he was diagnosed with a terminal illness with no cure."

— Jayson Jacoby

**"We had a good bunch of guys. All the guys on the bench that didn't play much, they worked just as hard as the rest of us did."**

— Dick Sheehy, senior on the 1972 Baker boys basketball team



In this photo from the March 23, 1972, issue of the Baker Democrat-Herald, Baker's Daryl Ross shoots against Corvallis on March 22, 1972. Teammate Craig Erickson (No. 14) looks on.

April 26, 2008, at Pendleton. He was 88.

Two starters on the 1972 team — Ross and Mike Davis, the top two scorers — have also passed away.

Ross died Jan. 7, 2015, at age 60 from ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease).

Davis died Jan. 4, 2016, at age 61.

"I'm glad we can do this for Daryl and Mike," said Dick Sheehy, who was a starter on the 1972 team and lives in Beaverton.

Several of the other players still live in Baker City, said Randy Daugherty, who has been working to organize the reunion and celebration, which will take place around 6:15 p.m., following the Baker girls game against Pendleton, which tips off at 5 p.m.

Daugherty was a junior starter on the 1972 team. But he broke his leg against Bend with four games left in the regular season and had to watch Baker's four tournament games from the bench. He was replaced in the backcourt by Scrivner.

"It was frustrating," Daugherty said. "You don't get those opportunities very often."

Another starter, Dave Mark, was lost for disciplinary reasons early in March of 1972.

Heriza, the assistant coach, also lives in Baker City.

So do the team's statistician, Gerry Steele, and manager, Verl Cote, along with some of the five cheerleaders — Belinda Guttridge, Debbie Colton, Teri Guymon, Toni Justus and Cindy Curtis.

"It's surprising how many

people from the team still live here," Daugherty said. "We should have a big representation (at the ceremony)."

Daugherty said it has been "very rewarding" to compile a history of the 1972 team, an exercise that has revived happy memories of the camaraderie and victories that he shared with his teammates.

"It was a special year in the history of Baker High School sports," he said.

#### The team

Scrivner was just a sophomore in 1972, and he never expected to finish the season in front of nearly as many people as lived then in Baker County.

But after playing three games in the Coliseum, including a crowd of slightly more than 10,000 in the semifinal win over Sunset, he was much less intimidated by the sea of faces.

"It was eye-opening at the beginning, but by the fourth game I was more comfortable," said Scrivner, a longtime Baker City resident who is living in Utah while recovering from cancer. His son, Drew, will drive him to Baker City for Friday's ceremony.

Scrivner had watched games before at the Coliseum. As a freshman — ineligible to play on the varsity — Scrivner saw Baker play in the 1971 tournament.

He imagined himself on the court.

"As a freshman I yearned to be on that team," he said.

Scrivner, in common with his 1972 teammates, uses one word more than any other to describe not only that

team, but also Hammond's coaching philosophy.

Discipline. "I remember the team camaraderie and what it's like to play on a disciplined ball team," Scrivner said.

And discipline was not limited to the court.

Hammond also required players to wear coats and ties on game days.

"It was expected of you," Scrivner said.

Greg Hammond said his dad taught him and all his other players that discipline was "not one thing, but it's about many things you do that have a cumulative effect — hair, clothes, how you act. A whole bunch of little things."

Greg was attending Oregon State University in 1972.

When it looked late in the season as though Baker would probably play Corvallis in the first round of the state tournament, Greg said his dad asked him to scout the team, which he did.

Although the level of excitement in Baker rose with each successive tournament win, the town was hardly uninterested even before the Bulldogs headed for Portland.

A lunch banquet on March 16, 1972, drew 167 people.

#### The tournament

Playing four games in as many days is a grueling schedule for any team.

But it was especially so for Baker.

The starting five — Ross, Davis, Scrivner, Sheehy and Craig Erickson — played almost the entirety of the first three games.

And in the championship game, Gary Hammond didn't substitute once.

Scrivner, the lone sophomore playing with four seniors, said it was difficult for him, at times, to be on the floor while his older teammates spent most or all of the game on the bench.

"That bothered me more as the years went by, all the work they put in," he said.

Sheehy had similar feelings.

"We had a good bunch of guys," he said. "All the guys on the bench that didn't play much, they worked just as hard as the rest of us did."

In the opening game against Corvallis before 5,937 fans on March 22, 1972, Baker rebounded from an 11-6 deficit after the first quarter to win 51-45.

Scrivner, making his state tournament debut, wasn't intimidated. He led the Bulldogs with 22 points. Davis had 10, Ross 8, Sheehy 7 and Erickson 4 points.

The next day, March 23, 1972, in a quarterfinal against Newberg, Baker set the tournament record for field goal percentage, making 26 of 40 shots — 65%.

And this time the team's star, Ross, more than lived up to his reputation as one of the state's top players.

Ross, who was Baker's leading scorer with an average of 21.4 points per game entering the tournament, had 28 points on 11 of 15 shooting from the field. Davis and Scrivner had 13 points each, Sheehy had 8 and Erickson 2.

In a semifinal game against Sunset on March 24, 1972, before 10,080 fans, Ross again led Baker with 31 points. Davis had 13 points, Scrivner 4 and Sheehy 2.

Gary Hammond told a reporter that Ross was the best player he had coached.

Heriza said Ross was a traditional "back to the basket" center, meaning he established position near the hoop, took a pass from a teammate and then looked for a good shot.

Heriza said Ross was a highly skilled player who had an array of head fakes, spins and other moves that often led to easy baskets.

Heriza, who remains a dedicated basketball fan, compared Ross with Drew Timme, the All-American player at Gonzaga University.

Besides the four memorable games in the Coliseum, Greg Hammond said he remembers vividly how enthusiastic the Baker fans were who had driven 300 miles to watch their team.

He recalls how there were so many Baker fans staying in the Holiday Inn in Portland that they were able to spell out the words "Baker Bulldogs" with a single letter in each room window.

#### The championship game

Coach Hammond's methodical offense would never be so vital to execute as against the swift Jefferson squad.

"If we tried to run with somebody like Jefferson we probably would have lost by 30," Sheehy said.

Scrivner agreed. "We had some big guys, with Daryl and Mike, but we couldn't run like Jefferson," he said. "We couldn't have won by running with them."

"They wanted to run and we wouldn't give them the ball," said Tim Wood, a member of the team.

Sheehy remembers that Jefferson showed off its athletic abilities early in the game.

"They were by far the best team we had seen, talent wise," Sheehy said.

Davis went up for a jumper, Baker's first shot, and Jefferson's Charles Channel, who led all scorers in the championship game with 19 points, swatted the ball into the crowd.

Not that the ball had to travel far to reach the spectators.

Sheehy said fans lined the court, so close that players "couldn't hardly get out of bounds without hitting somebody."

In 1972 the state tournament took place during spring break, so Greg Hammond, who was a student at Oregon State University, was able to watch all of Baker's games at the Coliseum.

He remembers that when his dad came out of the locker room and walked toward the bench before the start of the championship game, three Jefferson fans were sitting on Baker's bench.

Whether this was a small bit of gamesmanship or not, Gary Hammond simply walked up and greeted the fans, saying "I'm glad to see at least three of you are going to root for Baker High School."

Greg tells the story with a laugh.

"They got up and left," he said. "There was no animosity."

As important as controlling the ball on offense was, Heriza believes Baker's defensive prowess was at least as important, both in getting the Bulldogs to the championship game and in their chance to stun the Democrats.

"We took them out of their ballgame," he said. "We didn't give them a fast break."

The game started the way many people in the Coliseum probably expected.

Jefferson scored the first 6 points.

But Baker didn't panic.

The Bulldogs rallied, took the lead early in the second quarter and maintained it for most of the game. Baker led 28-24 at halftime and twice in the third quarter pushed the advantage to 7 points, the last time at 40-33.

Jefferson regained the lead at 47-46 with 5 minutes left, but Scrivner scored 4 straight points to give Baker its final lead, 50-49 with about 3:40 left.

But the Democrats scored 10 of the final 12 points.

Heriza said fatigue was a factor.

With the starting five playing the entire game, that was perhaps inevitable.

"When you play defense that way, you're going to get tired," he said.

Johnson, who was a senior, said the Bulldogs couldn't quite maintain the defensive intensity for the entire 32 minutes.

"When Jefferson went into another gear, we ran out of gas," he said.

Multiple players also cited as a key factor Jefferson coach Jack Bertell's decision to switch from a zone defense to man-to-man in the fourth quarter.

Even Baker's stifling defense wasn't capable of preventing Jefferson from taking a lot of shots, and the Democrats' quantity turned out to be more important than the Bulldogs' quality.

Baker made 21 of 37 field goals, 56.8%.

The Democrats missed more shots — 48 — than Baker attempted.

See, **Bulldogs**/Page A7